ALABAMA PRISON ARTS + EDUCATION PROJECT

THE WARBLER

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Dear Student, Artist, Thinker,

We learn to communicate very early by sound. When we are learning to talk, "ma-ma" and "pa-pa" (or some iteration based on cultural influences) often comes first. We separate sounds that have meaning ("hey") from sounds that do not ("fsergjkfft"). If you've ever tried to learn a second language, you know it is a challenge! So how are we able to learn our first language without really ever thinking about it?

That is one of the questions that people who study linguistics try to answer. They also spend a lot of time trying to figure out what the "rules" and norms of language are. For example, look at the following two sentences:

"I have been reading a really long, interesting book about crocodiles, alligators, and snakes." // "Reading been I have a interesting, long really book about and crocodiles, alligators, snakes."

Right away, we know one of these sentences is "off." A 5-year-old would know it too. Why is that? Now try this: out loud, say the words "think" and "this." Draw out the first sound so you're saying thhhhhhhhink and thhhhhhhhis (if someone looks at you funny, ignore them and press on — trust me, I'm going somewhere with this). You probably noticed that the "th" sound changes — one instance requires your tongue to vibrate. If you try swapping the "th" sounds into the other words, it'll sound really weird.

In all these cases, we instinctively know that one way is what we are used to and the other way is not, even if we can't explain why. One theory about how we learn these hidden rules of language is that as babies and toddlers, we babble and we listen. Beginning with nonsense words and experimentation, we use trial and error, and learn that certain sounds and combinations get us the things we want. Within only a few years, we master this incredibly complex system of communication.

What other things could we learn if we were allowed to "babble" in them? How might learning art, or math, or that second language change if you could freely try out new things and make mistakes without worrying about doing it "the right way"?

The Alabama Prison Arts + Education Project encourages students not to get stuck in the mud about the process of learning. What might happen when you pull the language of right/wrong completely out of your process of learning and engaging? Try it.

Kyes Stevens and the APAEP Team

"Language doesn't belong to grammarians, linguists, wordsmiths, writers, or editors. It belongs to the people who use it. It goes where people want it to go, and, like a balky mule, you can't make it go where it doesn't want to go."

ROSALIE MAGGIO // American author

WORDS INSIDE

FROM "BREAKING DOWN"...
spontaneities | sudden, unplanned, or surprising actions or outbursts

FROM "IS COMPUTER CODE"...
tractable | easy to deal with

FROM "JULIE WASHINGTON'S QUEST"...
seminal | a work that strongly influences those that follow

stymied | prevented or hindered

profusion | an abundance or large quantity of something

homonyms | two or more words having the same spelling or pronunciation but different meanings and origins ("kind" is a homonym: it means both "nice" and "a particular type")

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BIOGRAPHY

Sequoyah | The Man Who Saved the Cherokee Language

BY LUCAS REILLY | *Mental Floss* | September 24, 2018

Sequoyah made the reading and writing of the Cherokee language possible.

Image from Wikimedia Commons

Sequoyah was fascinated by books and letters, enchanted by the way people could divine meaning from ink-stained scribbles on a written page. Born in the 1760s in what is now Tennessee and trained as a silversmith and blacksmith, the Cherokee man never learned how to read or write in English, but he always knew that literacy and power were intertwined.

During most of Sequoyah's lifetime, the Cherokee language was entirely oral. According to the Manataka American Indian Council, a written language may have existed centuries earlier, but the script was supposedly lost as the tribe journeyed east across the continent. Sometime around 1809, Sequoyah began working on a new system to put the Cherokee language back on the page. He believed that, by inventing an alphabet, the Cherokee could share and save the stories that made their way of life unique.

At first, some Cherokee disliked Sequoyah's idea. White people were encroaching further on their land and culture, and they were resistant to anything that resembled assimilation. Some skeptics saw Sequoyah's attempts to create a written language as just another example of the tribe becoming more like the oncoming white settlers — in other words, another example of the tribe losing a grip on its culture and autonomy.

Sequoyah, however, saw it differently: Rather than destroy his culture, he saw the written word as a way to save it. He became convinced that the secret of white people's growing power was directly tied to their use of written language, which he believed was far more effective than collective memories or word-of-mouth. In the words of Sequoyah, "The white man is no magician." If they could do it, so could he.

Sequoyah became further convinced of this in 1813, after he helped the U.S Army fight the Creek War in Georgia. For months, he watched soldiers send letters to their families and saw war officers deliver important commands in written form. He found the capability to communicate across space and time profoundly important.

Sequoyah's first attempt to develop a written language, however, was relatively crude by comparison. He tried to invent a logographic system, designing a unique character for every word, but quickly realized he was creating too much unnecessary work for himself. (According to historian April Summit's book, *Sequoyah and the Invention of the Cherokee Alphabet*, his wife may have attempted to burn an early version of his alphabet, calling it witchcraft.) So Sequoyah started anew, this time constructing his language from letters he found in the Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic alphabets, as well as with some Arabic numerals.

Sequoyah became more reclusive and obsessive, spending hour upon hour working on his alphabet. According to the official website of the Cherokee Nation, people outside his family began whispering that he was meddling with sorcery. By 1821, Sequoyah was too busy to pay the gossip any mind: He was teaching his six-year-old daughter, Ayokeh, how to use the system.

As one story goes, Sequoyah was eventually charged with witchcraft and brought to trial before a town chief, who tested Sequoyah's claims by separating him and his daughter and asking them to communicate through their so-called writing system. By the trial's end, everybody involved was convinced that Sequoyah was telling the truth — the symbols truly were a distillation of Cherokee speech. Rather than punish Sequoyah, the officials asked him a question: Can you teach us how to read?

Once accepted by the Cherokee, Sequoyah's 86 character alphabet — which is technically called a syllabary — was widely studied. Within just a few years, thousands of people would learn how to read and write, with many Cherokee communities becoming more literate than the surrounding white populations. It wasn't long before the Cherokee language began appearing in books and newspapers: First published in 1828, *The Cherokee Phoenix* was the first Native American newspaper printed in the United States.

Sam Houston, the eventual governor of Texas, admired Sequoyah's achievement and reportedly told him, "Your invention of the alphabet is worth more to your people than two bags full of gold in the hands of every Cherokee." Today, while the Cherokee language is now considered endangered by UNESCO, Sequoyah's system remains a landmark innovation — and a source of hope for the future. ●

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WHICH WORD IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE HAS THE FOLLOWING 3 MEANINGS?
A. TO EMPTY
B. TO BE EVEN WITH
C. TO BE FULL OF

tomedes.com

Edited for clarity and space.

INTERVIEW

Breaking Down the, Uh, Blunders of Speech

ALL THINGS CONSIDERED | *National Public Radio* | September 1, 2007

Debbie Elliott: There's a stereotype about public radio people. We're mellow. We're smooth. We're articulate. And we never say, "you know," "I mean" or "um," or do we? Thanks to the skills of our producers, all of us can sound fluent and in command of the language. This week, we listen a little more closely to the way we actually speak. To find out why people "um" and "ah" so much, we turn to Michael Erard. He is the author of the new book, *Um ... : Slips, Stumbles, and Verbal Blunders, and What They Mean*.

Mr. Michael Erard: Thanks for having me, Debbie.

Elliott: So why do people blunder so much? What makes us "um" and "ah," and start sentences over and things like that? *Mr. Erard:* The language that we have and the brains that we have sort of means that we will do those things. And also, we have brains that filter those things out when we listen for messages and we listen for content. And so the system, in the way that it has evolved, has both given us blunders and given us a way to listen around them.

"Um" is a class of things called speech disfluencies, which are interruptions or spontaneities. What "um" actually means is a matter of some debate. Still, some people think that it's simply a noise that fills the time during which we're thinking. Other people say that "um" and "ah" are actual words and that they have two distinct meanings.

What does "um" mean? *Mr. Erard:* "Um" would mean that in the sentence that I'm about to speak there is a delay that's upcoming that will be slightly longer. "Ah" means there is a delay that's upcoming that may be shorter.

Oh, so it's a way of — sort of alerting the person that you're talking to that there's a pause coming up. *Mr. Erard:* Right.

And "um" would be a longer pause, and "ah" would be a shorter pause? *Mr. Erard:* That's correct. What we're doing is signaling to the person that we're talking to, "hey, I am actively searching for this stuff." So it's not actually a sign of not thinking, which is the common way of thinking about them, but they are signs of thinking.

Now, you write that there are equivalents to "ums" and "ahs" in just about every language including sign language. *Mr. Erard:* Mm-hmm. Pretty much every spoken and sign language, even invented languages have a way for speakers to signal some sort of delay or to fill a pause. And in a lot of languages, it is that same neutral vowel — "um," "ah." In French, it's "ei." In Hebrew it's "eh." In Spanish it's "e."

And why in sign language? *Mr. Erard:* I mean, it serves the same purpose in sign language that it serves in spoken language. It's to say, "I am thinking of the next thing to say," or "I may be experiencing some difficulty in coming up with the exact word." Or it could be, "don't interrupt me. I will have something to add shortly."

Are there any prevailing theories of where the sound "um" comes from? *Mr. Erard:* Well, there is the argument that it's related to the ancient Vedic word for the sound that the universe makes, which is "um." And that in the beginning was the word, and the word was "um." But that aside, I think that really the sense is that the "ah" and "um" are these very easy vowels to say.

Now, you write about the history and how people have been using this for centuries. But the one thing that I found interesting is that people didn't notice it so much until the advent of radio. And people were able to start to hear their voices. *Mr. Erard:* Yeah. The technology, the recording technology and the mass media really made speech into an object in a way that it hadn't been before. So people who were even transcribing verbatim prior to this era couldn't transcribe quickly enough to catch these things.

There were writers who noted them. Mark Twain noted them. Tom Sawyer says "ah" in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. But, by and large, it wasn't noticed as a part of good speaking until the early 20th century when attention to it just explodes. And it shows up in public speaking handbooks. It shows up in etiquette books. Just all over the place.

Um, Michael Erard, thank you so much.
Mr. Erard: Thank you. ●

Edited for clarity and space.

WHICH THREE WORDS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING?

FOUR LETTERS LONG; START WITH T, C OR B; HAVE THE SAME LAST THREE LETTERS YET DO NOT RHYME

tomedes.com

MATHEMATICS

Sudoku

#41 PUZZLE NO. 2957495

5		7	6	3				8
		9	2					
1	8						9	5
			8	4	7			
	4						2	7
		8		7				3
2			9	5		6		

©Sudoku.cool

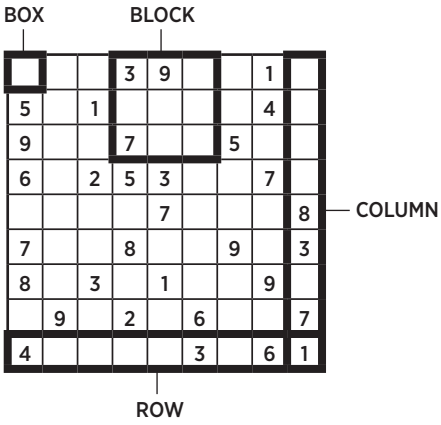
#42 PUZZLE NO. 4881452

	6	8		3				
			7	4				
	2		9	8	1			
						5	4	
			1	7				8
2			4			1	6	
		2				9		
	3	1		2		8	5	
		7						

©Sudoku.cool

SUDOKU HOW-TO GUIDE

1. Each block, row, and column must contain the numbers 1–9.
2. Sudoku is a game of logic and reasoning, so you should not need to guess.
3. Don't repeat numbers within each block, row, or column.
4. Use the process of elimination to figure out the correct placement of numbers in each box.
5. The answers appear on the last page of this newsletter.



What the example will look like solved

2	4	8	3	9	5	7	1	6
5	7	1	6	2	8	3	4	9
9	3	6	7	4	1	5	8	2
6	8	2	5	3	9	1	7	4
3	5	9	1	7	4	6	2	8
7	1	4	8	6	2	9	5	3
8	6	3	4	1	7	2	9	5
1	9	5	2	8	6	4	3	7
4	2	7	9	5	3	8	6	1

"When a language dies, a way of understanding the world dies with it, a way of looking at the world."

GEORGE STEINER // Franco-American literary critic, novelist, and educator

Icon from the Noun Project

DID YOU KNOW?

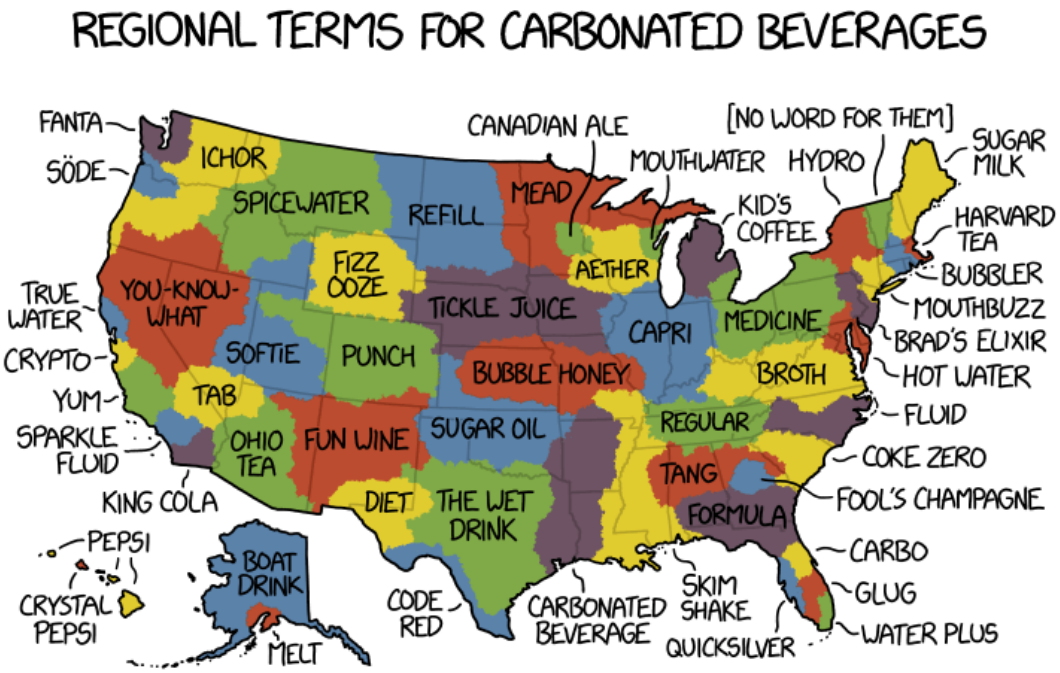
Pirahã is a Brazilian language that can be whistled, hummed, or **encoded in music**.

The English language consists of words, known as contronyms, that are **their own opposites**. For example, the word "cleave" has two meanings, i.e. "to cut apart" and "to bind together" which are opposites of each other.

Papua New Guinea has over **850 living languages**.

Onomatopoeias are words that **mimic the sounds** they describe. "Oink," "squish," and "sizzle" are examples of onomatopoeias.

unbelievable-facts.com



xkcd.com

Idiom

"Talk through one's hat"

Meaning Talk nonsense; especially on a subject that one professes to be knowledgeable about but in fact is ignorant of.

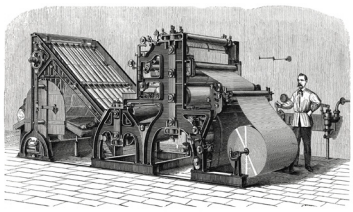
Origin This began life in the USA, in the late 19th century, with a slightly different meaning from the present one. It then meant "to bluster."

It would be nice to be able to report that this phrase alludes to some event where someone used a hat to disguise their speech. The only practice that comes close to fitting the bill is that of 'topping', in the UK parliament. To be allowed to make a 'a point of order', which is an interruption to a previous speech in order to query something that had been raised, members had to be 'seated and covered'. That is, seated and wearing a hat. Topping was the name given to 'talking out' a bill, otherwise known as filibustering, by continuing to speak until debating time ran out. Having made a point of order while wearing a top hat, a member of parliament couldn't be interrupted and could continue talking for as long as he/she wished. Naturally, as these speeches often lasted hours, they were frequently filled with rambling nonsense.

Although the link is plausible, there is little evidence that connects this practice with talking through one's hat. It also seems unlikely that the arcane practices of top-hatted Victorian gentlemen in the UK parliament would have crossed the Atlantic. Much more likely that the phrase originated in the USA and the meaning changed slightly over time.

Source: Phrases.org.uk (edited for clarity and space)

HEBREW DIED AS A SPOKEN, NATIVE LANGUAGE AROUND 200 CE. IT WAS LATER REVIVED ON 13 OCTOBER 1881 IN PARIS WHEN A MAN NAMED ELIEZER BEN-YEHUDA AND HIS FRIENDS AGREED TO **EXCLUSIVELY SPEAK HEBREW** IN THEIR CONVERSATIONS.



THE WORD "CLICHÉ" WAS ORIGINALLY AN **ONOMATOPOEIA**. IT CAME FROM THE SOUND THAT OLD PRINTING PRESSES MADE WHILE MAKING COPIES.

Icons from Noun Project and iStock

ART + CULTURE

Do You Speak Persian?

BY KAVEH AKBAR

Some days we can see Venus in mid-afternoon. Then at night, stars separated by billions of miles, light travelling years

to die in the back of an eye.

Is there a vocabulary for this—one to make dailiness amplify and not diminish wonder?

I have been so careless with the words I already have.

I don't remember how to say home
in my first language, or lonely, or light.

I remember only
delam barat tang shodeh, I miss you,

and *shab bekheir*, goodnight.

How is school going, Kaveh-joon?
Delam barat tang shodeh.

Are you still drinking?
Shab bekheir.

For so long every step I've taken
has been from one tongue to another.

To order the world:
I need, you need, he/she/it needs.

The rest, left to a hungry jackal
in the back of my brain.

Right now our moon looks like a pale cabbage rose.
Delam barat tang shodeh.

We are forever folding into the night.
Shab bekheir.

"Poetry is the art of hiding the inadequacy of language."

MOKOKOMA MOKHONOANA
// South African social critic and writer

WRITING PROMPT
As we go through life, our languages shift. Sometimes dramatically, if we learn a foreign language, but sometimes the change is more subtle. Think about how you used language as a child and how you use language as an adult. What's changed since then? What do you miss? What words have you now "earned"? Write a poem about that shift in how you speak.

Kaveh Akbar, "Do You Speak Persian" from splitthisrock.org, and featured in Narrative (2015).

Kaveh Akbar is an Iranian-American poet and scholar. Akbar was born in Tehran, Iran, in 1989. He is the author of Pilgrim Bell, published by Graywolf Press, Calling a Wolf a Wolf, published by Alice James Books in the US. In 2014, he founded the poetry interview website Divedapper. He received his MFA from Butler University, and his PhD in Creative Writing from Florida State University. He is a faculty member at Purdue University, and on the faculty of the low-residency MFA programs at Randolph College and Warren Wilson College.
Poet biography adapted from wikipedia.org

Word Search

L	C	I	L	A	N	G	U	A	G	E	T	O	R
F	U	D	R	L	L	P	A	A	L	U	O	L	O
O	J	I	E	C	O	G	W	G	A	G	E	O	C
L	A	M	M	A	E	O	O	K	P	N	L	D	L
D	C	I	E	B	I	E	N	I	N	O	U	O	E
I	K	N	M	B	S	G	D	N	B	T	O	C	W
N	A	I	B	A	N	S	E	L	M	H	N	Y	L
G	L	S	E	G	O	S	R	I	C	D	O	F	S
L	E	H	R	E	I	E	E	S	U	U	S	I	D
S	I	E	G	L	L	L	M	R	N	R	L	L	R
E	O	G	F	A	L	E	L	L	I	I	E	P	O
R	H	A	H	W	I	R	I	R	H	A	L	M	W
E	Y	M	L	T	B	A	W	E	A	N	A	A	R
E	A	E	C	B	I	C	I	N	N	E	P	I	S

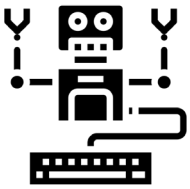
BILLIONS
REMEMBER
CARELESS
WORDS
SCHOOL
LIGHT
JACKAL
TONGUE
CABBAGE
PALE
WONDER
DIMINISH
LANGUAGE
AMPLIFY
FOLDING

OPINION

Is Computer Code a Foreign Language?

BY WILLIAM EGGINTON | *The New York Times* | March 17, 2019

Maryland's legislature is considering a bill to allow computer coding courses to fulfill the foreign language graduation requirement for high school. A similar bill passed the Florida State Senate in 2017 (but was ultimately rejected by the full Legislature), and a federal version proposed by Senators Bill Cassidy, Republican of Louisiana, and Maria Cantwell, Democrat of Washington, is being considered in Congress.



The animating idea behind these bills is that computer coding has become a valuable skill. This is certainly true. But the proposal that foreign language learning can be replaced by computer coding knowledge is misguided: It stems from a widely held but mistaken belief that science and technology education should take precedence over subjects like English, history and foreign languages.

As a professor of languages and literatures, I am naturally skeptical of such a position. I fervently believe that foreign language learning is essential for children's development into informed and productive citizens of the world. But even more urgent is my alarm at the growing tendency to accept and even foster the decline of the sort of interpersonal human contact that learning languages both requires and cultivates.

Language is an essential — perhaps the essential — marker of our species. We learn in and through natural languages; we develop our most fundamental cognitive skills by speaking and hearing languages; and we ultimately assume our identities as human beings and members of communities by exercising those languages. Our profound and impressive ability to create complex tools with which to manipulate our environments is secondary to our ability to conceptualize and communicate about those environments in natural languages.

The difference between natural and computer languages is not merely one of degree, with natural languages' involving vocabularies that are several orders of magnitude larger than those of computer languages. Natural languages aren't just more complex versions of the algorithms with which we teach machines to do tasks; they are also the living embodiments of our essence as social animals. We express our love and our losses, explore beauty, justice and the meaning of our existence, and even come to know ourselves all through natural languages.

The irony is that few people appreciate the uniqueness of human language more than coders working in artificial intelligence, who wrestle with the difficulty of replicating our cognitive abilities. The computer scientist Alan Turing noted that the question of whether a machine can think is incredibly difficult to determine, not least because of the lack of a clear definition of "thinking"; he proposed investigating instead the more tractable question of whether a machine can convince a human interlocutor that it's human — the so-called "Turing test."

One of the important lessons of Turing's test is the reminder that in our interactions with other people, we are fundamentally limited in how much we can know about another's thoughts and feelings, and that this limitation and the desire to transcend it is essential to our humanity. In other words, for us humans, communication is about much more than getting information or following instructions; it's about learning who we are by interacting with others.

The interpersonal essence of language learning extends to learning as a whole. We know that small-group, in-person instruction is more effective than traditional lectures. We ask questions, are asked in return, and we learn more, learn faster and retain more when we care about the people we are interacting with. It's no accident that despite the initial enthusiasm generated by MOOCs, or massive online open courses, they have in fact been a major disappointment, with completion rates as low as 5 percent. By comparison, online courses with smaller groups of students and direct feedback from the professor show completion rates as high as 85 percent.

In an age of ever-rising inequality and student debt, it's understandable that policymakers should seek to maximize the skills that seem the most marketable. And there is no doubt that computer programming is a valuable tool.

But this is also a time when we are becoming increasingly isolated from our communities and alienated from any notion of a common good. We need to invest more, not less, in language learning, and in the human contact it epitomizes. ●

Edited for clarity and space.

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HOW DO YOU **PRONOUNCE** "GHOTI"?

wikipedia.org

WORD PLAY

A Rebus puzzle is a picture representation of a common word or phrase. How the letters/images appear within each box will give you clues to the answer! For example, if you saw the letters "LOOK ULEAP," you could guess that the phrase is "Look before you leap." *Answers are on the last page!*

EDUCATION

Julie Washington's Quest to Get Schools to Respect African-American English

BY WILLIAM BRENNAN | *The Atlantic* | April 2018

Studying African-American Vernacular English wasn't Julie Washington's plan. But one day in the fall of 1990, her speech-pathology doctorate fresh in hand, she found herself sitting with a little girl at a school outside Detroit. The two were reading the classic P. D. Eastman picture book *Are You My Mother?*, which tells the tale of a lost hatchling trying to find its way home. The girl—4 years old, homeless, and a heavy speaker of the dialect known as African-American English, or AAE—listened attentively as Washington read:

"Are you my mother?" the baby bird asked the cow.
"How could I be your mother?" said the cow. "I am a cow."

Washington closed the book and asked the girl to recount the story from memory. The girl hesitated, then launched into it. "She goes, 'Is you my mama? I ain't none a yo' mama!,' " Washington recalls. "She did the whole thing in dialect." Washington found the girl's retelling deft and charming, and she left the classroom smiling.

Only later, sitting in her office at the University of Michigan, did Washington have the flash of insight that would redirect her career. "She had to listen to a story in a dialect she doesn't really use herself, understand the meaning, hold the story in her memory, recode it in her own dialect, and then say it all back to me. That's hard," Washington said, especially for a young child. The experience convinced her that dialect was playing a significant and unrecognized role in the reading achievement of millions of children—and very likely contributing to the persistence of the black–white gap in test scores.

In the decades since, Washington, now a professor of communications sciences and disorders at Georgia State, has devoted her career to exploring the challenges that speakers of African-American English face in the classroom. Not all African American students speak the dialect, but most do. Teaching kids to "code-switch" between their home dialect and the dialect spoken at school, Washington has come to believe, is an important step toward creating a more level playing field.

Washington grew up in an all-black part of Seattle, at the height of the civil-rights movement, surrounded by African-American English and fascinated by language from an early age. As a young girl, she played a game with herself, eavesdropping on her mother's phone calls and trying to guess who was on the other end. She found that she could always tell just by listening to the different ways her mother spoke after saying "Hello?" Her father was a high-school history teacher and her mother was a gospel singer; like many middle-class parents in the neighborhood, they held AAE in low regard—they considered the dialect a barrier to "mainstream" success—and forbade Washington and her siblings from speaking it in the house. But Washington picked it up from friends. Today she code-switches effortlessly and unremarkably.

Why exactly does speaking a nonstandard dialect stymie kids as they're learning to read? In his seminal 1972 book, *Language in the Inner City*, the linguist William Labov advanced the reigning theory. A teacher writes a word on the blackboard—something simple, like *told* or *past*—sounding it out letter by letter as she does. For a speaker of standard English, the lesson is clear: The four letters represent the four sounds that make up the word. But the rule is more complex for AAE speakers. In the black vernacular, many consonant clusters—such as the *-ld* in told, and the *-st* in past—aren't fully pronounced when they appear at the end of a word. A speaker of Afri-

"Silence is the language of god, all else is poor translation."

RUMI // Persian poet, theologian, and Islamic scholar

Image by Tim Tomkinson

can-American English is likely to say *told* the same as *toll* (or even *toe*), and *past* the same as *pass*. The profusion of homonyms obscures the fundamental sound-to-letter principle: AAE-speaking kids are presented with an enormous number of words that are all pronounced the same yet spelled in nonsensically different ways. To help kids grasp the dialect of the classroom, Labov wrote, teachers should employ "the methods used in teaching English as a foreign language."

Labov's recommendation was largely overlooked outside his field. But last June, Washington completed a four-year study of almost 1,000 low-income elementary-school students in a southern city—the most extensive study ever of the dialect's role in education—which led her to a similar conclusion. Strikingly, she discovered that African American students' lagging growth in reading was accounted for almost entirely by the low scores of the students who speak the heaviest dialect. And location mattered: The majority of kids in the city she studied, Washington found, use a regional variety of AAE that is especially far from standard English. This suggests to her that children who speak one of the dialect's "really dense" varieties are having an experience in the classroom not unlike that of, say, native Spanish speakers.

What's come to concern researchers more recently is the extent to which dialect differences between student and teacher increase the student's cognitive load. "What does it do to your response times when you have to stop and interpret something before you can move on?," Washington asks. "Over the course of a school day, those moments have to add up."

If recent research on the effects of mismatched dialects is right, Washington reasons, one way to narrow the gap is to help kids learn the dialect of school, while also helping schools accept the dialect students bring with them.

As Washington learned early in her career, even seemingly benign conversations about African-American English can be fraught—and often, it's speakers of the dialect who most fiercely resist efforts to incorporate it into the classroom. In preparation for one of her first studies of AAE, she sent out consent forms to parents, describing her goal of studying "the role Black English plays in children's oral language." Weeks passed, and not a single form came back. Eventually, Washington called a parents' night and asked why no one had signed the form. Two dozen parents stared at her in silence until, Washington told me, one mother erupted: "How dare you say we talk different than other people! What the hell is 'black English'? We don't speak 'black English'!"

"You do," Washington said, and to make her point, she code-switched. "I think I said, 'Look, we ain't got no business doin' this,'" she recalled. The room burst into laughter. "Okay, we do speak like that," the mother granted. "But we don't like you calling it that." It was a lesson Washington never forgot: The dialect was so stigmatized that even among people who spoke it every day, she needed to tread carefully.

A new insight of Washington's might offer a new path forward, however. In presenting code-switching lessons as a way to ward off catastrophic reading failure, she says, advocates have failed to convey the upsides of speaking African-American English. In a recent paper, Washington points to research showing that fluent speakers of two dialects might benefit from some of the cognitive advantages that accrue to speakers of two languages. She hopes that this line of thinking might at last persuade teachers and parents alike to buy in. "We see value in speaking two languages," Washington told me. "But we don't see value in speaking two dialects. Maybe it's time we did." ●

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RANDOM-NEST

3 Fictional Languages You Can Really Learn

BY ALISON ELDRIDGE | britannica.com

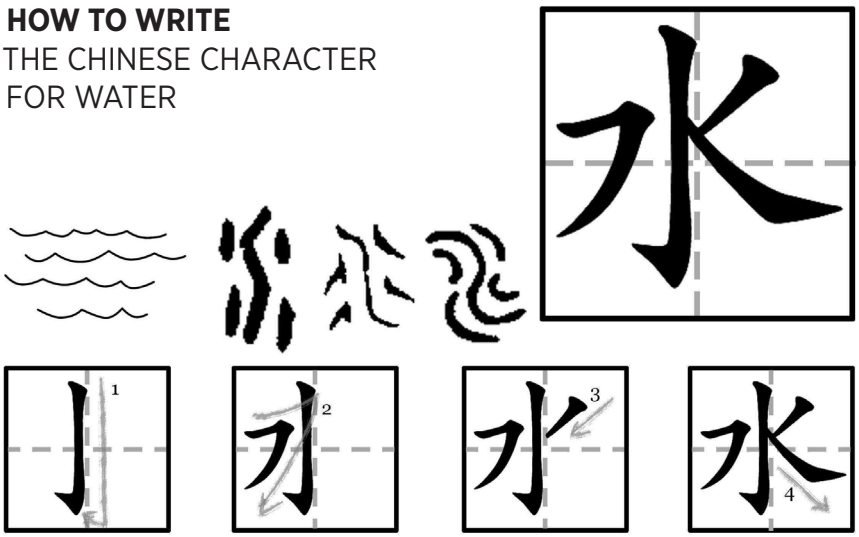
Dothraki | *Game of Thrones*, *A Song of Ice and Fire*
George R.R. Martin, in his *A Song of Ice and Fire* book series, established the nomadic horse-rearing Dothraki people. In the books Martin included very few words of the Dothraki language, but for the HBO television series David Peterson of the Language Creation Society was hired to turn those words into a complete lexicon. As the Dothraki people's lives depend first and foremost on their horses, Peterson created the language to reflect this close relationship with horse riding and rearing. Dothraki is frequently spoken by actors on the show, and many fans are learning, too. ***Hash yer dothrae chek asshekh?*** *— How are you today? (Do you ride well today?)*

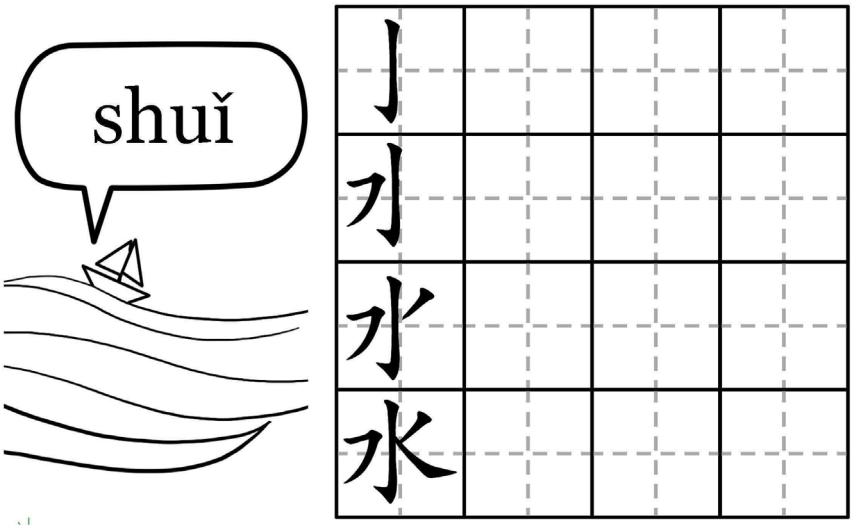
Klingon | *Star Trek*
Klingon is one of the most well-known fictional languages. It was created by linguist Marc Okrand as the language of the warrior Klingon race on the television show Star Trek. Okrand published several books about the language, and an organization known as the Klingon Language Institute has a quarterly journal dedicated to it. Fans use the language to conduct marriage ceremonies and to write songs, and there has even been an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* published in Klingon. While Klingon does have its own alphabet, the language is usually transliterated into English. ***nuqDaq 'oH puchpa''e'*** *— Where is the bathroom?*

Elvish | The works of J.R.R. Tolkien
J.R.R. Tolkien, a philologist and lexicographer, began creating his Elvish languages before he started on any of his well-known works, such as *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. There are actually two forms of Elvish commonly learned by fans: Quenya, or high Elvish, and Sindarin, both based loosely on Finnish and Welsh, two languages Tolkien himself studied. And these can be subdivided into different dialects. There are even different forms of Elvish script — one of which you may have seen on the One Ring featured in *The Lord of the Rings* films. ***Elen síla lumenn' omentielvo*** *— A star shines on the hour of our meeting.*

Edited for space.

HOW TO WRITE
THE CHINESE CHARACTER
FOR WATER





Words of Encouragement

I know these times are tough on us all. However it is with a joyous heart that I write to you now. Your hard work and determination to get your education will serve you well the rest of your life. When you feel alone and undignified, know that you will carry your education with you wherever you go. I am rooting and praying for you. I am proud of the steps that you have taken to better your lives. You are my brothers and I can testify that your pursuit of higher education will change you personally and those you come in contact with in the best way possible. Stand tall and press on friends.

Jared

alabama PRISON ARTS & EDUCATION PROJECT
1061 Beard-Eaves Memorial Coliseum // Auburn University, AL 36849

Answers

SUDOKU #41

5	2	7	6	3	9	4	1	8
4	1	6	7	8	5	2	3	9
8	3	9	2	1	4	5	7	6
7	6	3	5	9	1	8	4	2
1	8	4	3	2	6	7	9	5
9	5	2	8	4	7	3	6	1
3	4	5	1	6	8	9	2	7
6	9	8	4	7	2	1	5	3
2	7	1	9	5	3	6	8	4

SUDOKU #42

7	6	8	5	3	2	4	9	1
3	1	9	7	4	6	2	8	5
5	2	4	9	8	1	7	3	6
1	7	3	2	6	8	5	4	9
4	9	6	1	7	5	3	2	8
2	8	5	4	9	3	1	6	7
6	5	2	8	1	4	9	7	3
9	3	1	6	2	7	8	5	4
8	4	7	3	5	9	6	1	2

Brainteasers

Page 2 Flush
Page 3 tomb, comb, and bomb
Page 7 Fish (*gh*, pronounced "F" as in *enough* or *tough*; *o*, pronounced "I" as in *women*; *ti*, pronounced "SH" as in *nation* or *motion*.
Rebus Puzzle:
1. He's on the last lap
2. Overcome the odds
3. Backward somersault

Send ideas and comments to:

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UNTIL NEXT TIME !